

## The Gay`s Tale

**MARC MASON**

*A second-floor room in Netherfield, painted black, The ceiling is hung with ex-army camouflage netting. Apart from a double mattress on the floor the only other furniture is a dressing table with a mirror, and a stool. On the walls are photographs of Marilyn Munroe and other cultural heroes: also lots of well hung young men.*

*Marc is one of a new breed of pioneers pushing back the frontiers of convention.*

I`m twenty, born in Bedford, moved to Milton Keynes a year later. Went to Lord Grey School. I was a punk at the age of thirteen. There were a few other punks around but I was the best. I used to get into trouble for being lippy. I used to go around with all the girls at school and the boys didn`t like it. They called me a poof and a queer but I didn`t care. I used to wear black skin-tight trousers, string vests, kilts and a leather jacket with writing on. I had long spikey hair, loads of earrings and I was generally dirty – oh and a pair of steel toecap boots. Can you imagine me in a pair of steelies?

### **I Was a Punk**

After I left school I got a job in a bakery making doughnuts. That was a laugh. I got on well with all the women. I was a really good doughnut maker and enjoyed the job until I moved out of my parent`s house. I started getting into other things and couldn`t get up for work in the mornings so I left.

I was a punk for a long time but I got bored with it and for two years I was a punk but didn`t want to be one. Because I`m gay and was really young, sixteen-ish, I was sort of ashamed of myself in one way but not another. I thought if I looked really hard and macho I`d be O.K. And then I met this bloke called Conrad who was a Futurist. I got talking with him and he told me that everyone knew I was gay so I shouldn`t hide it. That`s what changed me and since then I`ve just been myself. I was about seventeen and started wearing pedal-pushers and ballet shoes, frilly shirts, berets, scarves, fishnets – all futurist stuff.

I never really went to clubs then, I just stayed around Milton Keynes. There were loads of parties then and I only went around with Conrad and few other people. We called ourselves the Six Masons because there were six of us who used to go everywhere together. We used to go to each other`s houses and drink cider from the moment we got up to the time we went to bed and smoke dope all day, every day. And we`d go to parties and do sulphate every single weekend. Trevor was the next person to help me. I met him and he was gay and he was weird. I wasn`t so weird then. We used to go to the Starting Gate and that`s where I got off with him. I didn`t know much. After then there was always competition between me and Trevor. We slagged each other down left, right and centre but we still liked each other. There was me and my crowd and him and his, the Braidy Bunch – people who worked in Braids Hairdressers It was these two groups, always in the Starting Gate, all girls

and gay blokes. Sunday night was funk night. Eddie Richards was the DJ and we got him interested in playing Futurist music and Gay Disco. But in the end we had to leave the Starting Gate as basically it was just a pub for `grebos` during the week. The brewery had the idea of turning it into a disco pub as Sunday nights were doing so well. They promised us all sorts of things and Eddie thought we`d stay there forever but they turned it into Austens. They got the wrong end of the stick completely. Austens is just a normal night club, they didn`t understand what we were trying to do. I wasn`t that involved then. I just used to go every week and got drunk.

The people and the music moved to Centrecom where there was no bar. You had to take your own drink in - usually we got it from the Starting Gate anyway! Then it moved to the Gladiators Rugby Club then Mr. J`s in Bletchley. For a year and a half there was talk of moving to Peartree Bridge and then finally we did last year. Eddie asked me if I`d like to be more involved so I decorated the place. We decided to give it a name and call it the Joint. The name came about because of smoking a joint and because it was a real joint venture and in America the joint is a place of entertainment. We rushed to get it open. We painted everything black and draped black plastic everywhere and had loads of mannequin dolls. We advertised it and had Tik and Tok on the first night. Eddie booked the bands.

## **The Joint**

The Joint has become a place where almost anyone can go, enjoy themselves, go over the top. It`s just good fun I think. To me it`s a place that`s black, extremely dark, the music`s brilliant, you can get drunk and do exactly what you want and have a really good time. It`s more of a community thing than a club. All the bands that come and play, from London or wherever think The Joint is a brilliant place. Alien Sex Fiend loved it and said so in Zig Zag magazine. They reckoned it was their best ever gig. I`m in charge of how the place looks. When we first started it took ages to get ready every week because it`s a youth centre the rest of the time. I used to get there about midday, get out about seven o`clock and have an hour to get changed and do my make-up. It takes about seven hours to do with four of us helping. It has to come down afterwards but I don`t do that as usually I am too drunk! But that only takes an hour as everything is ripped down. I usually go on the door until everyone comes in. I set an example. Does that sound bad? I sit at the door and try to put across what The Joint`s about. I`m meant to be selective but I`m not at all. Skinheads have been banned but I don`t really mind that. They always look violent and we try to stop the children and the wallies from coming in. If it was up to Eddie it would be much more selective because then the club looks better and encourages better people to come. I never turn anyone away really. I don`t like restrictions.

I`d like to be really famous but I`m just too lazy. One night after The Joint had finished me, Trevor and a few others - we were all really drunk - went absolutely mad, talking like women and chatting up all the men and being over the top. We were so good we thought we should start a drag act. So I phoned up Trevor and Twiggy and they agreed to do it. This was two weeks before the Christmas Party and

we decided to do it then. We borrowed the costumes from friends and bought wigs, we came on as nuns in suspenders with fire and bells to the music from The Omen and then we went into miming Maria off The Sound of Music album, then the Lonely Goatherd. We did Andrews Sisters records and the Shangri-La`s Leader of the Pack - that one was my idea - and the finale was Divine and it`s Raining Men by the Weather Girls.

## **I`d Like To Be Famous**

At the end everyone got wet and sprayed with shaving foam. We intended to do the show again but you see what I mean about being lazy? I`d like to be famous for everything I do because I keep changing my mind and my image and kind of like the way I am. I`d just like to be famous for being myself. Whatever I did would be really good. I don`t really care what happens to me as long as I`m happy and enjoying myself. I`d like more money but I can manage with what I get on the dole. Everything else comes with money doesn`t it.

What I hate about Milton Keynes is not knowing places to go. It`s quite boring. I couldn`t imagine not having somewhere like The Joint. I have to go out and do something every Friday night. I`ve lived here all my life and grown up with the place. I like the houses and the newness and all the trees here. I feel safe here. I wouldn`t like to move to London as I don`t know many people there and I`d have to go through it all again, getting to know people. I`d have to start at the bottom again. Ha!